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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/618,791	07/14/2003	Thorsten Pannek	10191/3085	7312
26646	7590	05/30/2006		
KENYON & KENYON LLP ONE BROADWAY NEW YORK, NY 10004			EXAMINER BRUENJES, CHRISTOPHER P	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1772	
DATE MAILED: 05/30/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/618,791

Applicant(s)

PANNEK ET AL.

Examiner

Christopher P. Bruenjes

Art Unit

1772

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 April 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 10-19 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 and 20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on February 27, 2006 has been entered.

WITHDRAWN REJECTIONS

2. The 35 U.S.C. 102 rejections of claims 2 and 20 as anticipated by Reichenbach et al of record in the Office Action mailed April 6, 2005, Pages 6-7 Paragraph 5 and the Office Action mailed November 23, 2005, Pages 3-4 Paragraph 5, have been withdrawn due to Applicant's amendments in the Paper entered February 27, 2006.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

Art Unit: 1772

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The limitation "the functional layer in the areas is in direct contact with a layer situated underneath the at least one first sacrificial layer" renders the claim vague and indefinite because it is not understood how an immovable element can be in direct contact with a layer that is beneath the layer that the functional layer is contacting. Is this limitation stating that the first sacrificial layer is removed prior to forming the functional layer so that there is no first sacrificial layer between the immovable elements and the layer situated under the first sacrificial layer if the first sacrificial layer were present there? Or is this limitation describing a method in which the immovable element some how slides down or the underneath layer moves upward to form a connection between the underneath layer and the immovable element after removal of the first sacrificial layer?

Art Unit: 1772

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Reichenbach et al (WO 01/46066 A2). US 2004/0065932 A1 is used as the English equivalent for WO 01/46066 A2 for purposes of citing within this rejection.

Regarding claim 1, Reichenbach et al anticipate a component comprising a functional layer (reference number 16, Figure 10). A surface micromechanical structure is produced in the functional layer including movable elements (reference number 26, Figure 10) and immovable elements (represented by the other parts of the functional layer 16). The component further comprises at least one electrically non-conductive first insulation layer (reference number 12, Figure 10 outside the void area) and at least one first sacrificial layer (reference number 30, Figure 10) and a substrate (reference number 10, Figure 7). The substrate is connected to the functional layer via the first insulation layer and first sacrificial layer (Figure 10). The movable elements are exposed by partially

Art Unit: 1772

removing the at least one first sacrificial layer in the area of the movable elements using wet etching (p.4, paragraph 48).

Although Reichenbach et al teach that vapor etching follows the wet etching step to remove the remainder of the first sacrificial layer, a component is described in Reichenbach et al after the wet etching and prior to the vapor etching, which is at the point between Figures 9 and 10 of the description. The at least one electrically non-conductive first insulation layer includes a material that is not substantially attacked by removing of the at least one first sacrificial layer (page 3, paragraphs 43 and 44). Regarding claim 5, the limitation "the at least one first sacrificial layer is removed at least in areas of the immovable elements" is determined in light of the specification and drawings to be defining an intermediate step. Therefore, the limitation within the article claim presented is determined to define the component as having no sacrificial layer between the immovable elements and any layer that would have been below the sacrificial layer had one been present. In this case, Reichenbach et al teach that the immovable elements are in contact with the first insulation layer and not the first sacrificial layer.

Art Unit: 1772

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

9. Claims 2 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reichenbach et al (WO 01/46066 A2). US 2004/0065932 A1 is used as the English equivalent for WO 01/46066 A2 for purposes of citing within this rejection.

Reichenbach et al teach all that is claimed in claim 1 as shown above. Note claim 20 includes all of the limitations of claim 1 in addition to the limitation that "the component includes at least one area where: the at least..." to the end of

Art Unit: 1772

the claim. Reichenbach et al fail to explicitly teach in one embodiment that the electroconductive layer is arranged over the substrate layer and contactingly situated vertically between the at least one electrically non-conductive first insulation layer and the at least one first sacrificial layer. However in the embodiment of Figures 17-18, the electroconductive layer (reference number 14, Figure 18) is arranged over the substrate layer and contactingly situated vertically between the at least one electrically non-conductive first insulation layer (reference number 12, Figure 18) and the first sacrificial layer (the removed portion in Figure 18) (p.5, paragraph 57). The embodiment described in page 5, paragraph 57 and shown in Figures 17 and 18, fails to explicitly teach that the movable elements are exposed by partially removing the at least one first sacrificial layer in the area of the movable elements. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time Applicant's invention was made that the embodiment of Figures 17 and 18 described in page 5, paragraph 57 is formed by the same method steps described with regard to Figures 5-12. Therefore, at least at the point during the manufacture of the article of Figure 18 in which the wet etching has occurred but the vapor etching has not the first sacrificial

Art Unit: 1772

layer would be partially removed in the area of the movable elements.

Thus, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art that the embodiment of Figures 17 and 18 described in page 5, paragraph 57 teaches a component at least during the manufacture of the article in which the first sacrificial layer is partially removed in the area of the movable elements, as suggested by Reichenbach et al.

10. Claims 3-4 and 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reichenbach et al (WO 01/46066 A2) in view of Laermer (WO 02/38492 A1). US 2004/0065932 A1 is used as the English equivalent for WO 01/46066 A2 for purposes of citing within this rejection. US 2004/0112937 A1 is used as the English equivalent for WO 02/38492 A1 for purposes of citing within this rejection.

Reichenbach et al teach all that is claimed in claim 1 as shown above. Reichenbach et al further teach at least one second sacrificial layer (the part of reference number 30, Figure 7 that is above the movable elements). The component also comprises at least one second insulation layer (reference number 34, Figure 11). The movable elements are exposed by removing the at least one second sacrificial layer (Figure 11).

Art Unit: 1772

The at least one second insulation layer includes a material that is not substantially attacked by the removing of the at least one second sacrificial layer because the sacrificial layer is made of silicon oxide and the second insulation layer is made of silicon nitride and because the second insulation layer is applied after removing the second sacrificial layer. The at least one electrically non-conductive first insulation layer and the at least one second insulation are in contact and therefore are located only in areas of the immovable elements (Figure 11). The limitation "the at least one second sacrificial layer is removed at least in areas of the immovable elements" is determined in light of the specification and drawings to be defining an intermediate step. Therefore, the limitation within the article claim presented is determined to define the component as having no sacrificial layer between the immovable elements and any layer that would have been above the sacrificial layer, such as the second insulation layer, had one been present. In this case, Reichenbach et al teach that the immovable elements are in contact with the second insulation layer and not the second sacrificial layer. At least one of the immovable elements includes at least one electrode (Figure 34).

Reichenbach et al fail to teach forming a membrane layer over the surface micromechanical structure. However, Laermer

Art Unit: 1772

teach that when covering micromechanical structures with insulating materials such as the silicon nitride of Reichenbach or the Pyrex glass of Laermer it is advantageous if the side of the glass or insulating material facing away from the microstructure have an electrically conductive layer or membrane, since then, the electrical voltage applied during bonding is distributed homogeneously over the entire surface of the glass element. Further, this layer permits electrostatic holding of the silicon wafer in a plasma etching system, during later backside structuring processes of the silicon layer, from which each respective microstructure is preferably patterned out (page 2, paragraph 12). One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that an electrically conductive layer or membrane layer is coated over the side of the insulating layer applied as a hermetic seal for a micromechanical structure, in order to provide the component with a homogeneous distribution of electrical voltage and an electrostatic holding layer for backside structuring processes of the silicon substrate layer, as taught by Laermer.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time Applicant's invention was made to arrange an electrically conductive membrane layer over the second insulation layer and second sacrificial layer of

Art Unit: 1772

Reichenbach et al over the surface micromechanical structure of Reichenbach et al, in order to provide the component with a homogeneous distribution of electrical voltage and an electrostatic holding layer for backside structuring processes of the silicon substrate layer, as taught by Laermer.

Note that because the membrane layer of Laermer and Reichenbach et al combined is only connected to the second insulation layer and the second insulation layer is mechanically connected to the substrate via at least one of the immovable elements, then the membrane layer is at least indirectly mechanically connected to the substrate via at least one of the immovable elements.

11. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reichenbach et al (WO 01/46066 A2) in view of Laermer (WO 02/38492 A1) as applied to claim 3 above, and further in view of Zavracky et al (USPN 5,490,034).

Reichenbach et al and Laermer combined teach all that is claimed in claim 3 as shown above. Reichenbach et al further teach that the first and second sacrificial layers are formed of silicon oxide removed by HF etching medium (page 3, paragraph 44) and that the second insulation layer is formed of silicon nitride (page 4, paragraph 49).

Art Unit: 1772

Reichenbach et al and Laermer combined fail to teach the first insulation layer is formed of silicon nitride.

Reichenbach et al teaches that the first insulation layer should be an insulating material that will not be removed by HF etching as quickly as silicon oxide, but fails to provide examples of a material that would accomplish these requirements. However, Zavracky et al, which also deals with forming micromechanical structures for microsensors, teaches that silicon nitride is a well known material that is not attacked by HF etching as quickly as silicon oxide during removal of the silicon oxide sacrificial layer (col.4, 1.57-63 and Figures 2E and 2F). One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that silicon nitride is a well known insulator used in forming micromechanical structures for sensors, that is not attacked by HF etching as quickly as silicon oxide and would be used as an insulator that is not a sacrificial layer in a micromechanical structure, as taught by Zavracky et al.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time Applicant's invention was made to use silicon nitride as the first insulator of Reichenbach et al because silicon nitride is a well known useful insulator in the art of micromechanical structures used to form sensors and is not attacked by HF etching as quickly as silicon

Art Unit: 1772

oxide and therefore would not be removed during the removal of the sacrificial layer, as taught by Zavracky et al.

12. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reichenbach et al (WO 01/46066 A2) in view of Laermer (WO 02/38492 A1) as applied to claim 3 above, and further in view of Zavracky et al (USPN 5,490,034) and in view of Chatterjee et al.

Reichenbach et al and Laermer combined teach all that is claimed in claim 3 as shown above. Reichenbach et al further teach that the first and second sacrificial layers are formed of silicon oxide removed by HF etching medium (page 3, paragraph 44) and that the second insulation layer is formed of silicon nitride (page 4, paragraph 49).

Reichenbach et al and Laermer combined fail to teach the first insulation layer is formed of silicon nitride. Reichenbach et al teaches that the first insulation layer should be an insulating material that will not be removed by HF etching as quickly as silicon oxide, but fails to provide examples of a material that would accomplish these requirements. However, Zavracky et al, which also deals with forming micromechanical structures for microsensors, teaches that silicon nitride is a well known material that is not attacked by HF etching as

Art Unit: 1772

quickly as silicon oxide during removal of the silicon oxide sacrificial layer (col.4, 1.57-63 and Figures 2E and 2F). One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that silicon nitride is a well known insulator used in forming micromechanical structures for sensors, that is not attached by HF etching as quickly as silicon oxide and would be used as an insulator that is not a sacrificial layer in a micromechanical structure, as taught by Zavracky et al.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time Applicant's invention was made to use silicon nitride as the first insulator of Reichenbach et al because silicon nitride is a well known useful insulator in the art of micromechanical structures used to form sensors and is not attacked by HF etching as quickly as silicon oxide and therefore would not be removed during the removal of the sacrificial layer, as taught by Zavracky et al.

Reichenbach et al, Laermer, and Zavracky et al taken as a whole fail to teach that the silicon nitride forming the first and second insulation layers has silicon content greater than 42%. However, Chatterjee et al teach that a higher silicon content in silicon nitride, such as greater than 46%, helps to achieve a relatively low etch rate in comparison to silicon oxide when using an HF-based etching process (col.4, 1.56-61).

Art Unit: 1772

Based on the teachings of Reichenbach et al and Zavracky et al, one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that any manipulation of silicon nitride that result in achieving lower etch rates with regards to silicon oxide in an HF-based etching process would be advantageous.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time Applicant's invention was made to form the silicon nitride used as the first and second insulation layer of the component of Reichenbach et al, Laermer, and Zavracky et al with silicon content greater than 42%, in order to achieve a lower etch rate in comparison to silicon oxide when using an HF-based etching process, as taught by Chatterjee, which is an useful advantage for the silicon nitride to possess as suggested by the teachings of Reichenbach et al and Zavracky et al.

ANSWERS TO APPLICANT'S ARGUMENTS

13. Applicant's arguments regarding the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejections of claims 1, 2, 5, and 20 as anticipated by Reichenbach et al have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Note claims 2 and 20 are not rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 but the arguments will be addressed since the same art is still be used.

In response to Applicant's argument that Reichenbach does not teach or suggest a single device that meets all of the claimed limitations, as presented above claims 1 and 5 are rejected based on the single device taught in the method steps of Figures 1-13 at the one point in the manufacturing process between Figures 9 and 10, which is after wet etching but before vapor etching of the sacrificial layer.

In response to Applicant's argument that Reichenbach does not teach that an electroconductive layer is contactingly situated vertically between the sacrificial and insulting layers, this limitation in claim 2 and 20 is now rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as presented above, because the limitations are taught in the combination of the device of Figures 17 and 18 and the method steps of forming that device which are described with regard to the device of Figures 1-13.

14. Applicant's arguments regarding the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejections of claims 3-4 and 6-7 over Reichenbach in view of Laermer have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to Applicant's argument that in order for a claim to be rejected for obviousness the combination of references must teach each element and there must be motivation to combine the elements, the rejection presented above shows how

Art Unit: 1772

the combination teaches each element claimed and the motivation to combine the elements. Note Applicant did not argue any specific deficiencies with regard to the combination.

In response to Applicant's argument that Laermer fails to cure the deficiencies of Reichenbach as applied to claim 1, see the rejection of claim 1 and answers to the arguments regarding claim 1 presented above.

15. Applicant's arguments regarding the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection of claim 8 over Reichenbach in view of Laermer and Zavracky have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to Applicant's argument that Laermer and Zavracky fail to cure the deficiencies of Reichenbach as applied to claim 1, see the rejection of claim 1 and answers to the arguments regarding claim 1 presented above.

16. Applicant's arguments regarding the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection of claim 9 over Reichenbach in view of Laermer, Zavracky, and Chatterjee have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to Applicant's argument that Laermer, Zavracky, and Chatterjee fail to cure the deficiencies of Reichenbach as

Art Unit: 1772

applied to claim 1, see the rejection of claim 1 and answers to the arguments regarding claim 1 presented above.

Conclusion

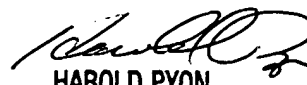
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher P. Bruenjes whose telephone number is 571-272-1489. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on 571-272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Christopher P Bruenjes
Examiner
Art Unit 1772

CPB
CPB
May 17, 2006


HAROLD PYON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

1772 5/22/06